

April 9, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States Senate today took up and passed S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. Contained within that bill was the [Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Act](#) (H.R. 512/S.500), legislation which passed in the House of Representatives February 6, 2007. The bill now comes back to the House for a procedural vote and then will head to the White House for President Bush's signature.

"The last few months have witnessed an incredible level of momentum and support for this endeavor," Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), H.R. 512's author, said. **"What was once a dream is now a reality. It is my hope that we can get this to the president in short order so that we can immediately form the commission and subsequently move forward to complete our American cultural mosaic."**

"I believe we must celebrate the diversity of our nation, and Latinos have been a significant part of American history. They have contributed to the arts, business, and served in our nation's military with distinction," Senator Salazar, S. 500's author, said. "This bill would take the first step in commemorating the rich contributions of the Latino community to American life. The end result will be a more enhanced experience for the 20 million visitors that come to our nation's capital to learn the full history of America."

H.R. 512 sets up a 23 member commission charged with producing three things: one, a national conference to bring stakeholders, experts, policymakers and other interested parties together to discuss the museum's viability; two, a fundraising plan to create an extensive public-private partnership; and three, a report to Congress detailing a recommended plan of action on how to move forward with taking the museum from concept to reality. All of this will happen within 24 months of H.R. 512 being signed into law.

"Today's vote would never have occurred were it not for a bipartisan group of champions who all agreed that this was a worthwhile effort," Rep. Becerra said. **"To the 24 bipartisan cosponsors of S.500, the Senate version of H.R. 512: thank you for support and your fortitude. To Senators Harry Reid, Jeff Bingaman, Mel Martinez and Pete Dominici: thank you for the 11th hour advocacy that ensured this bill's passage."**

“Leaders, corporations, and several great non-profit groups have done tremendous work to educate our congressional leaders and the public about this effort and deserve both recognition and thanks. Some of these groups include the Museum of the American Latino Advisory Board Committee, the Central American Resource Center, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the Hispanic Education Coalition, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Mexican Heritage Corporation, the National Council of La Raza, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, the Southwest Voter Registration & Education Project, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the William C. Velasquez Institute, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials.

“And most importantly, to Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Senators Ken Salazar of Colorado and Bob Menendez of New Jersey: this effort would be nowhere if not for your passion and your dogged drive to see to it that this bill became law in this congress.”

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